

AUDITIONING FOR THE COMMERCIAL THEATRE - Fall Semester 2017

THR 4332.02 (3 credits)

Sam Houston State University

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Theatre and Musical Theatre Department

Meeting times: T/Th 11:00am – 12:30pm
Class Location: UTC 105
Office Location: UTC 115

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course students will prepare audition materials which suit the variety of demands in the commercial world of theatre, musical theatre, cinema, and television. Practice of these materials and personal presentation will be focused on along with learning about the business of auditioning,

Writing Enhanced. Credit 3.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To embrace the responsibility and honor of being an actor.
- To gain practical insight on monologue, song, dance and cold reading audition techniques for the stage .
- To understand proper audition protocol from the moment you walk into the room to the moment you leave (and everything in-between).
- To understand the importance of research and preparation for this business; i.e. auditions, theater news, graduate schools, regional and commercial theatre (Broadway).
- To learn the tools necessary in securing talent agency interviews and auditions.
- To develop a workable and professional looking picture, resume, and audition book by the end of the semester.

REQUIRED READING AND RESOURCES:

Acting: Make it Your Business by Paul Russell – Available online

Backstage: the Actor's Resource – Acting trade publication – available in the theatre office or online.
Playbill.com, *Broadwayworld.com*, *NYTimes.com* and *Variety.com* (theatre sections), *Actorsequity.org*, *Backstage.com*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance, Punctuality, and Participation: You are expected to attend all classes and arrive on time. Punctuality is extremely important in this profession; to reinforce that, three late arrivals to class will count as one absence. If you know it is going to be extremely difficult to be on time because of another class, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. If you know that you will have any conflicts with class in advance, professional or otherwise, please let me know in writing and provide documentation in hard copy. If you are going to miss class or be late for any reason, please email me as a professional courtesy.

- If you are ill or injured for a prolonged period of time causing you to miss class, please provide a hard copy of a doctor's note.
- Each audition day missed will count as two absences.
- If you are more than ten minutes late to class, this will count as an absence.
- No assignments will be accepted late. If there are extenuating circumstances that are prohibiting you from submitting a major assignment on time, please contact me *in advance* to make a special arrangement.

I expect full out, class participation and your preparedness with presenting assignments and performance materials. Your openness to critique and constructive feedback, willingness to incorporate new ideas and information are crucial to your progress in this class and development as an artist. I strive to make the classroom a safe and supportive environment and that requires everyone's participation and positive presence. Throughout class I ask that you demonstrate respect for yourself, your fellow classmates and your instructor at all times.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy: University policy states that if any student must be absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day, they must notify their instructor by the 12th calendar day after the first day of the semester. I will then notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments are to be completed.

ASSIGNMENTS:

What is your type? (*included with the submission of *Audition Search Tools Investigation*) – This is your personal assessment of your talent skills, personality and physical traits. It is a measure of your marketability and into what roles you fit. (5 pts.)

Audition search tools investigation –

Part 1 -Choose websites, trade publications, or other means of finding auditions.

Part 2 -Select three audition notices (hopefully from three different sources) that you would want to attend and explain why.

Part 3 – Submit your choices in writing and include your personal assessment of your type.*

Include in your writing: For each audition notice -

- The details for each audition – what it's for - where, when, how you submit your info (4pts)
- Type of contract/union/non-union (1pt)
- Length of contract/job (1pt)
- Who's casting and/or who's the creative staff. (2pts)
- Why have you selected this audition? Why are you right for this job? (1pt)
- Where did you find the posting? (1pt)
- Was it easy to find/decipher? (1pt)

Overall -

- Which audition search tool did you find most helpful and why? 2(pts)

DUE: August 29th

Over the course of the semester you will find 4 more auditions that you will write up in the same way. They will also be included in your final Audition Portfolio.

Elevator speeches: – written and practiced. You will create and master the thoughts and words necessary to answer these questions readily. These questions are all similar but slightly different. You need to be able to articulate what you want to say about yourself on the spur of the moment. The responses should be able to be spoken comfortably in 10 – 20 seconds.

- *What do you do?*
- *Tell me a little bit about yourself?*
- *What are you doing now?*
- *Where do you see your career going, or what future projects do you have coming up?*

You will submit three versions of your speech in writing. (10 pts)

DUE: August 31st

Monologue and song preparation – You will start building your audition repertoire. You have a choice of the following 3 options according to your talents.

Option 1: Prepare and present six audition monologues

Option 2: Prepare and present three audition monologues and three songs.

Option 3: Prepare and present two audition monologues and four songs.

Your choices will become part of your final audition book.

Due Dates: *Choose option 1, 2 or 3* – August 31st (12 pts each)

First two selections – September 5th

Second two selections – September 12th

Third two selections – September 19th

Please provide me with:

- The names of the monologues or songs that you have chosen
- The title of the show from which the material originates
- The author/composer/lyricist names
- Date of when it was written
- What character performs this piece
- What category the material covers.

These selections will be presented in class throughout the semester but used primarily for our

Mock Audition Days:

- **Acting and Vocal calls:** Along with presenting prepared selections of audition monologues and songs, students will be given material for prepared and cold reading auditions on occasion, which will be performed in class.
- **Dance Calls:** You will be given advanced notice for the audition days that include dance. Please wear appropriate attire for movement!

Resume –

Part 1 – First draft – class peer review and submit to me for feedback. (5) DUE: September 14th

Part 2 – Second draft (10pts)

DUE: September 21st

Part 3 – Final version included with Final Portfolio.

Cover Letters - to a Casting Director and an Agent –

Part 1 – Initial draft for peer review and instructor feedback. (5 pts)

DUE: September 28th

Part 2 – Second draft. (10 pts)

DUE: October 3rd

Part 3 – Final version included with Final Portfolio

Broadway Production Investigation Paper:

Each student will choose two Broadway shows, currently running on Broadway or on tour, to investigate as if they were going to audition for a replacement cast. Please choose **one show that would be right for you** to be cast in a role or ensemble; i.e., type, age appropriate, voice appropriate, skill appropriate etc., **and one that you feel passionate about**. Among the areas the student should research are: the synopsis of the show, the director/and or choreographer of the show; other works by the playwright or composer; how long has the show or tour has been running; what contract the production is under; who the casting director is for the show and information on them; a brief history of the theatre or tour history/schedule. Please submit a 5-6 page paper.

Part 1 – Choose your shows and why you chose them. One paragraph on each.

DUE: September 14th

Part 2 – First draft of paper – must include footnotes and bibliography, minimum of three sources.

DUE: October 12th

Part 3 – Finished paper with incorporated notes and feedback.

DUE: October 19th

Life after SHSU: Graduate School or Major Market Research Paper:

Each student will choose to report on post-undergraduate experience (choose one of the two below). Also be prepared to share what you've discovered with the class.

- **Graduate MFA program.** Among the areas the student should investigate are: curriculum, philosophy of the program, faculty, tuition cost, financial aid, and audition/admission requirements. Students must also attempt to interview one current student and one alumnus who has been away from the program for at least two years but no more than six. Please submit a 5-7 page paper and follow the writing guide lines.
- **Major Regional Market:** Research two professional theaters in a thriving regional market. This should include: the theatre's mission statement; the type of plays that they produce; the artistic staff; how the theatre hires actors, including auditions, contracts and procedures; internship or training opportunities that the theatre provides; current season; types of contracts used. Learn about the cost of living in the chosen market: rent, utilities, transportation, etc. Student must also attempt to interview an actor who currently lives and works in this market. Please submit a 5-7 page paper and follow the writing guide lines.

Step 1 – Identify program/institution OR regional market and the two selected theatres chosen within it. Add a brief explanation of why you have made your choice, and who might you be interviewing in association with this project. Please put this in writing in two to three paragraphs.

DUE: October 26th

Step 2 – First Draft – must include footnotes and bibliography, minimum of three sources.

DUE: November 16th

Step 3 – Finished paper – with incorporated notes and feedback.

DUE: November 30th

Final Audition Portfolio: This will act as your Final Submission

- **Picture/Resumes:** Students will be required to submit a professional resume (and picture) with their final audition presentation. You will not be required to submit a picture because of related costs. *However, on the days that guest artists are in class it HIGHLY recommended that you have one to give them.*
- **Monologue/Songs:** full printed copies of your audition material will be submitted with all proper markings, cuts, cues, and any “homework” that you have done on the pieces.
- **Two Cover letters: Casting Director and Agent**
- **Four current audition notices that you would have attended:** These should be shows that you would type into. Please highlight important information (Date, time, location, category of audition, casting director, salary, length of contract – same as previous exercise).
- ****ORIGINAL CASTING NOTICE** – write your own casting notice for a job/role that fits you perfectly and would be able to book!

DUE: November 30th

Writing Assignment Formatting should include:

- Your name, the course name, and the date, *single spaced* on the first page.
- Title or name of the assignment on the first page.
- Double space the body of the writing.
- Footnotes and bibliography for research papers are required. Please cite all sources and quotations with footnotes. Please reference and use Chicago formatting (footnotes and bibliography).
- Bibliography does not count toward the size of the assignment.

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Search Tool and Audition notices and Type	5%
Monologue/Song Choices	5%
Elevator Speeches	3%
Resume	3%
Cover Letters	5%
Broadway Production Investigation Paper	15%
Life After SHSU Paper	20%
Final Audition Portfolio	5%
<u>Class participation (includes in class work, book and small assignments)</u>	<u>39%</u>
Total =	100%

Classroom Visitors: Please consult with the instructor at least one week prior to any visitation. *The instructor must approve all visitors.*

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty involves taking responsibility for your own education, completing all work required of you on your own, and contributing thoughtfully and fully to any group work assigned or sanctioned by your instructors. In more straightforward terms, academic honesty means not cheating on tests and not plagiarizing.

Americans with Disabilities Act : SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk to me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center by calling (936) 294-1720.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

WEEK 1 –

- **Thursday 8/24:** Introduction & Types

WEEK 2 –

- **Tuesday 8/29:** Present Findings – Audition Search Tools
 - Due: Audition Search Tools and Type Analysis
- **Thursday 8/31:** Elevator Speeches Practice/Commercial Copy Discussion
 - **Due:**
 - Elevator Speeches
 - Option Choice
 - Book (Must have in your possession)

WEEK 3 –

- **Tuesday 9/5:** Commercial Copy
 - **Due:**
 - Commercial Copy
 - First two audition choices
 - Book Chapters – Intro, Chapter 1
- **Thursday 9/7:** Commercial Copy
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chap 2 & 3

WEEK 4 –

- **Tuesday 9/12:**
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chap 4
 - Second two audition selections

- **Thursday 9/14:**
 - Resume Peer Review
 - Broadway Research Paper – Part 1

WEEK 5 –

- **Tuesday 9/19:**
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chapter 5 – Cover Letters
 - Third two audition selections
- **Thursday 9/21:**
 - **Due:**
 - Second draft of resumes
 - Book Chapters 7 & 8

WEEK 6 –

- **Tuesday 9/26:** AUDTION DAY 1 (no piano) – Must be prepared with at least two of six selections
 - **Due:**
- **Thursday 9/28:**
 - **Due:**
 - Self-reflection paper 1
 - Cover letters – peer review

WEEK 7 –

- **Tuesday 10/3:** Watch *Every Little Step*
 - **Due:**
 - Second draft – Cover Letters
- **Thursday 10/5:** Finish *Every Little Step*
 - **Due:**

WEEK 8 –

- **Tuesday 10/10:** AUDTION DAY 2 (Piano) – Must be prepared with all selections
- **Thursday 10/12:**
 - **Due:**
 - Broadway Research Paper – first draft
 - Book Chapter 9
 - Self-reflection paper 2

WEEK 9 –

- **Tuesday 10/17:** Skype with Guest Artist
 - **Due:** Questions for guest artist
- **Thursday 10/19:**
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chapter 11 & 12
 - Broadway Research Paper – final

WEEK 10 –

- **Tuesday 10/24:** AUDITION DAY 3 (Piano)
- **Thursday 10/26:** Skype day with guest artist
 - **Due:**
 - Self-Reflection 3
 - Life After SHSU – Part 1

WEEK 11 –

- **Tuesday 10/31:** AUDITION DAY 4 (Piano)
- **Thursday 11/2:** On Camera Work
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chapters 13 & 14
 - Self-reflection paper 4

WEEK 12 –

- **Tuesday 11/7:** AUDITION DAY 5 (On Camera Day)
- **Thursday 11/9:** Watch playback
 - **Due:**
 - Self-reflection paper 5

WEEK 13 –

- **Tuesday 11/14:** AUDITION DAY 6 (Piano)
- **Thursday 11/16:**
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chapters 6 & 10
 - Life After SHSU paper – 1st draft
 - Self-reflection paper 6

WEEK 14 –

- **Tuesday 11/21:** AUDITION DAY 7 (Piano)
- **Thursday 11/23: THANKSGIVING**

WEEK 15 –

- **Tuesday 11/28:**
 - **Due:**
 - Book Chapter 15
 - Self-reflection paper 7
- **Thursday 11/30:** Wrap up discussion
 - **Due:**
 - Final Portfolio
 - Life After SHSU paper – final